

RTM F&B Minutes regular scheduled meeting 5/07/12- draft

Quorum with 12 of 13 members present

Present: B. Orr, J. Davis, K. Hoffman, M. Thorne, D. Ritchie, A. Rycenga, J. Palen, J. Sini, T. Schwarz, R. Tierney, C. Brode, T. Duffy. (K. Hoffman & J. Davis arrived at 7:47 pm and did not vote on the first agenda item).

Absent: B. Smith

Also in attendance: members of the public, BOE, administration, RTM Education Committee. Channel 79 recorded the meeting.

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Bruce Orr at 7:40 pm

Motion to approve the agenda was made by D. Ritchie, seconded by M. Thorne

First item on the agenda was resolution 12-10 accepting a gift of \$50,000 from the Darien Technology Fund to provide funding to acquire an interactive training system for the Darien Police department. There was some discussion if this gift would result in future expenses to the town after the initial seed monies were used and the software was already in place. There was also discussion regarding the name of the donor. The Darien Technology Fund has changed its name to the Darien Community and Technology Fund. The committee unanimously approved the gift with a 10-0 vote with an amendment that the rules committee changes the resolution to note the name change of the donor.

The second item was resolution 12-11 accepting a gift of \$10,770 from the Estate of Charles Meister to the Darien Senior center. There was a brief discussion if the gift was tied to the current Senior Center location or an outright gift to the center. The gift was approved unanimously with a 12-0 vote.

Third item was resolution 12-9 accepting the gift of \$250,000 from the Darien Little League for the renovation of the Gallagher field at Cherry Lawn Park. There was a brief discussion surrounding the plans of the upgrade. The gift was accepted unanimously with a 12-0 vote.

Chairman Orr thanked the various donors for their generosity to the town.

Item Four was the discussion and vote on the Board of Education budget, Board of Selectmen Budget, Capital expenditures, Refunding Resolution.

A motion was made by D. Ritchie and seconded by A. Rycenga to move and take action on the BOF approved \$79,984,182 for the BOE budget for 2012/2013 fiscal year. The originally proposed budget increase of 5.26% was reduced to 4.83%. The BOF requested a reduction of \$340,000 from the original proposal: \$165k in outright reduction and \$175,000 OPEB contributions after recalculating with the actuary numbers. A lengthy discussion ensued with several topics discussed. One area of focus was spending on Special Education. It was noted that increases had slowed to single digits in the past year however; over a 5 year span it has increased 40%. Once again the committee asked that better measurements and metrics should be put in place to monitor the expenditures more closely. It was

suggested that an outside consultant be brought in to look at our SPED procedures and expenditures. It was noted that there will be a new director for SPED and progress is being made in stemming the overall growth but there is still room for improvement. The BOE representatives noted that 60 new SPED students came into the system during the past year. BOE representatives noted efficiencies in the SPED program led to cost savings and therefore lowered the overall expenses submitted for excess cost reimbursement compared with the budgeted numbers for reimbursement. The shortfall in the 2011/2012 BOE fiscal year was also a result of unusual long term substitute costs due to an unusual increase in pregnancies of teachers. Some members felt that the general education budget was being squeezed by the increases in personnel and SPED. Many members felt a vote against the budget or a motion to reduce the budget would simply squeeze the general education funds further. Many costs are fixed due to negotiated employee contracts and state mandated SPED requirements. The only way make meaningful reductions in expenditures would be a reduction in head count and increasing class sizes. It was felt by a several members this was not the general wish of the town's constituents at this time. RTM Education committee Chairwoman Lois Schneider noted at her most recent committee meeting there was some discussion to reduce the budget but the proposed amendment to reduce the BOE budget failed. The Education Committee subsequently approved the BOE 2012/2013 proposed budget with a 12-1 vote. There was also some discussion of accumulating needs that have been pushed back over the years such as deferred equipment, educational, and non-educational needs. These amounts could be as high as \$2 million dollars and eventually will have to be funded. There was a discussion on the possible need to replace three school oil tanks. The Connecticut DEP is still looking at the situation and the potential exposure for replacement costs could range from \$125,000 to \$135,000 per tank. A call to question was made by J. Sini and a vote followed. The BOE budget was approved with 11 in favor and 1 abstention (T.Duffy)

A motion was made by J. Palen and seconded by J Sini to move and take action on BOS Budget of \$40,250,354 for 2012/2013 fiscal year. There was some discussion surrounding the debt service and what percent of it was related to town operations and what portion related to education projects. There are no large scale projects on the horizon which would require significant bond funding except for the upcoming relocation of the BOE, Senior Center, Mather Community Center. There will be an upcoming request to the RTM for roughly \$964,000 to close out the Tokeneke and High School building projects due to less than expected state reimbursements. This will not be part of the BOE budget and will need to be funded from the Town's General Fund Reserve Balance and will likely come to the RTMin September of 2012. The motion was unanimously approved with a 12-0 vote.

A motion was made by D. Ritchie and seconded by J. Davis to move and take action on the Capital Expenditures of \$2,079,481 for the 2012/2013 fiscal year. It was noted that the BOF had moved some items around in order to keep the mil rate stabile. The BOF cut the BOE request for \$117,000 for security cameras at the schools, allocated money for the fire department drill tower for \$110,000 which removed it from the budget request, closed old accounts with unused monies for \$610,000 and added \$150,000 to this amount for the Middlesex Middle School roof repair account. There was some discussion surrounding the future debt service levels and capital projects on the horizon such as fire

truck replacements which could total \$2 million dollars or more in the next few years. . The motion was unanimously approved with a 12-0 vote.

A motion was made by A. Rycenga and seconded by J. Palen to discuss and take action on the refunding resolution. There was not an actual resolution number for the committee to vote on. There was a discussion regarding the ability to refinance town bonds if the opportunities provided a saving to the town. This resolution would give the BOF the authority to refinance up to \$60,000,000 (up from \$50,000,000) worth of bonds without having to come to the RTM each time for approval. The item was approved unanimously with a 12-0 vote.

Minutes of F&B March 12, 2012 regularly scheduled meeting were approved with an 11-0 vote with the following member abstaining from the vote: C. Brode

Minutes of the Special F&B meeting scheduled March 19, 2012 were approved with an 8-0 vote with the following member abstaining: C. Brode, J. Palen, A. Rycenga, and T. Scharwz

Minutes of the F&B regularly scheduled April 23, 2012 were approved with a 9-0 vote with the following members abstaining: C. Brode, J. Sini, and J. Palen

Chairman Orr said he would circulate to the committee potential comments for his address when presenting the votes to the RTM at the upcoming RTM meeting on May14, 2012. If any committee members had any comments they would like to see presented then they should submit them to Chairman Orr prior the RTM meeting.

J. Sini made a motion to adjourn at 9:40 pm and seconded by all.